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The charmed roe; or, The little brother and ... sister, illustr. by O. ...

Charmed roe

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69

The CHARMED ROE.

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Otto Speckter.

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Augusta C. Gresley
with Annie's love
Dec. 17th 1864

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THE CHARMED ROE.

OR

The Little Brother and Little Sister.

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THE CHARMED ROE,
or the
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Illustrated by
OTTO SPECKTER.

T.Picken,lith. L.Haghe, del.t LONDON, JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET, Day & Son lith.rs to the Queen.

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THE CHARMED ROE;

OR,

THE LITTLE BROTHER AND LITTLE SISTER.

A Fairy Story.

ILLUSTRATED BY OTTO SPECKTER,

WITH TWELVE PLATES.

DRAWN ON STONE BY LOUIS HAGHE AND THOMAS PICKEM.

Uniform with Otto Speckter's "Puss in Boots."

LONDON:
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET.
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List of Illustrations.

PAGE

FIRST PICTURE 7

SECOND PICTURE 9

THIRD PICTURE 11

FOURTH PICTURE 13

FIFTH PICTURE 15

SIXTH PICTURE 17

SEVENTH PICTURE 19

EIGHTH PICTURE 21

NINTH PICTURE 25

TENTH PICTURE 27

ELEVENTH PICTURE (*See Frontispiece*) 29

TWELFTH PICTURE 33

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Plate 1

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THE CHARMED ROE;

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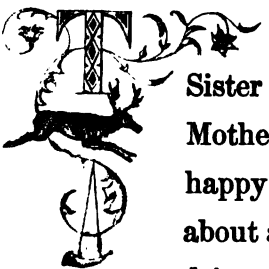
FIRST PICTURE.



THE little Brother took the little Sister by the hand, and said, "Since our Mother died we have not enjoyed one happy hour. Our Stepmother knocks us about all day long, and when we go to her, drives us out with blows and kicks. The hard crusts of bread, left after meals, are our food, and the little Dog under the table fares better than we; for he, every now and then, has a nice tit-bit thrown to

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him. It is a mercy of God that our poor Mother knows not of this treatment. Come, let us set out together to wander into the wide, wide world."

You see how sorrowfully they take their departure. The wicked Stepmother is watching them stealthily; the little Dog also is listening, and understands all about it.

They walked for the whole day, over fields, meadows, rocks, and woods; and when it rained, "The sky weeps," says Little Sister, "as well as we ourselves."

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SECOND PICTURE.

THE evening found them in the midst of an extensive forest, and they were utterly worn out with sorrow and hunger and the long walk. Then says Little Brother, "Sister dear, I am very thirsty; if I only knew where there was a spring, I would just run and take a draught: I thought I heard the rustling of one." Little Brother arose, and took Little Sister's hand, in order to seek for the spring. But the wicked Stepmother, who was a Witch, had sneaked after them, in the way in which witches only can sneak along, and had bewitched all the springs and fountains in the forest. When, therefore, they found out the spring, which leaped glistening

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over the stones, the little Brother wanted to drink from it; but the little Sister distinguished, amidst its murmuring, as it rushed along, these words: "He who drinks out of me, becomes a Roe!—he who drinks out of me, becomes a Roe!" These words were uttered by the little bubbles in the water. You can see them, with their little arms and heads, skipping about. Little Sister said, "Little Brother, I pray of you not to drink; if you do, you will be turned into a roe, and will run away from me." But Little Brother had straightway stooped down to the spring, and would not permit his Sister to hold him back. The wicked Stepmother stands behind the tree, and watches until Little Brother has tasted the water.

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THIRD PICTURE.

AS soon as the first drops touched his lips, he stood before her in the shape of a Roe fawn. Little Sister now burst into a flood of tears on account of her poor little Brother, who had been bewitched, and the little Roe shed tears also, and laid its head sorrowfully on Little Sister's bosom, and in this way they remained some time, the one shedding tears over the other. The wicked Stepmother slips away, full of malicious exultation. At length the little girl exclaims, "Console yourself, dear little Roe; I will never desert you." Then she undid her garter, and fastened it round the Roe's neck, and pulled some rushes, and plaited them into a pliable rope.

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FOURTH PICTURE.

SHE fastened the little animal by the rope of rushes, and led it onwards, constantly penetrating deeper into the forest; and when they had proceeded a long, long distance, they perceived a small cottage, and the maiden and the Roe stole onwards on tiptoe, and peeped noiselessly in, and lo and behold! they found it entirely empty, and the idea struck them that there they might rest and dwell.

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FIFTH PICTURE.

WHEN the little Sister went in search of leaves and moss to make a soft bed for the Roe. And every morning she went out to gather roots and berries and nuts for herself, and brought back for the Roe soft grass, which it ate out of her hand, and was satisfied, and sported round about her. As night approached, when Little Sister grew tired, and when she had said her prayers, she laid her head down on the Roe's back; it was her pillow, upon it she sank into soft slumber; and if only her Brother had retained his human form, it would have been a delightful kind of life to lead. They both grew stronger and taller, and Little Brother acquired a pair of horns.

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SIXTH PICTURE.

THEY did not continue, however, very long thus all alone in the wilderness. It happened that the King of the country came down to hunt in state in that forest, so that its inmost recesses re-echoed to the blowing of horns, and the barking of hounds, and the joyous cries of the huntsmen. The little Roe heard this, and would have given anything to have been present. "Oh, Little Sister," said he, "pray, let me out to the hunt. I cannot remain quiet any longer;" and he begged and prayed so long and earnestly that at last she consented and let him out at the door. "But," says she to him, "return without fail in the evening. I shall lock my little door on account of the wild boisterous hunters; and in order that I may recog-

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nise you, you must knock, and say, 'My little Sister dear, let me in here;' and unless you make use of these words, I shall not open my door." In a moment the young Roe had leapt over the low hedge and was out of sight, and felt as happy as possible, enjoying the beautiful bright sunshine. Little Sister stood long gazing wistfully after him, kissing her hand to him as he went.

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SEVENTH PICTURE.

THE King and his hunters beheld the beautiful creature, and gave chase to it, but they could not overtake it. As it grew dark the Roe bounded home, knocked lightly at the door, and said, "My little Sister dear, let me in here," upon which the little door opened, and he rushed in and slept the whole night without interruption on his soft couch. The next morning the hunt was renewed; and as soon as the little Roe heard the notes of the bugle-horn, and the wild *halloo* of the huntsmen, he had no rest. Little Sister opened the door for him again, saying, "Take care to be back in the evening, and not to forget the sentence you have to speak." As soon as the King and the hunters saw the Roe with

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the collar, they all singled him out and set off in pursuit: but he was too swift and active for them. This went on the whole day; at last towards evening the hunters hemmed it in, and one of them succeeded in wounding it slightly in the foot, so that it was forced to limp, and to make off slowly towards home. One of the hunters perceiving this, followed it stealthily as far as the little cottage, and heard him call out, "My Sister dear, let me in here," and saw that the door was opened for him. Little Sister, however, was exceedingly alarmed when the little Roe entered wounded; she kneeled down before him, washed off the blood, laid healing herbs upon the wound, fondled and kissed the limb, lamenting it, and said to him, "Go to your bed, beloved Roe, that you may become well again." The little Sister then fastened the door, but the hunter had seen and heard all, and taking care to forget nothing, went to the King and told it all to him. Then said the King, "To-morrow the chase shall be renewed."

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EIGHTH PICTURE.

HE little Roe's wound was so slight, that the next morning all traces of it had departed; and when he once more heard the hunting-cries out of doors, he exclaimed, "I cannot restrain myself; I must be in the midst of it; but there is not one of them that shall catch me in a hurry." The little Sister cried, and said, "Now they will be sure to kill you; I won't let you out." "Then I shall die here of vexation if you hold me back. If I hear the bugle, it seems to me as though I were like to jump out of my shoes. So the little Sister discovered that she could not prevent it, and she opened the door with heavy heart,

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full of forebodings, and the little Roe bounded forth, hearty and joyous, into the forest.

As soon as ever the King espied him, he said to his huntsmen, "Now, have at him!—pursue him the whole day and night through to catch him; but let no one on any account do him any harm."

Just as the sun was about to set, the King was conducted, by his own desire, to the little cottage in the forest; and when he arrived before the little door, he knocked, and said, "Sister dear, let me in here." Then the door opened, and the King slipped into the little cottage, and there stood before him a maiden more beautiful than any he had ever seen in his life. But the maiden was so frightened when she saw, not her own dear little Roe, but a grand King enter, with a crown on his head, that she endeavoured to run away as fast as she could. The King, however, held her fast, looked kindly on her, and said, "Will you go with me to my palace, and become my own dear wife?" "With all my heart," answered the maiden; "but the little Roe

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must go too; I cannot leave him on any account." The King replied, "He shall remain with you as long as you live, and he shall want nothing." In the mean time the little Roe himself had reached the cottage, and after hearing what passed, he joyously stepped into the house.

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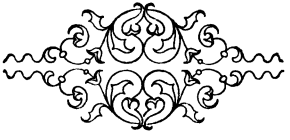

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NINTH PICTURE.

LITTLE Sister once more attached the rope of rushes around the Roebuck's neck, and leading it with her own hand, quitted the little cottage. But the King placed the little Sister on his horse before him, and rode out of the forest. Little Brother trotted along beside them, and Little Sister related to the King the whole story concerning him as far as she knew it. The King conducted the fair maiden to his palace, where the marriage was celebrated with great ceremony and pomp.

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TENTH PICTURE.

AND the little Sister became Queen, and they lived happily together for a long while. The little Roe was cherished and pampered; and a great many orders and other marks of distinction were bestowed on him, as being His Majesty's Brother-in-law.

The wicked Stepmother, who had been the cause of driving the poor children into the world, never for a moment supposed that Little Brother and Sister would escape being torn to pieces by the wild beasts. When she heard, therefore, how great good fortune had befallen them, she desired to satisfy herself of the truth of the report with her own eyes; and, accompanied by

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her daughter, who was as ugly as night, and possessed only one eye, she sneaked into the bushes which grew near the palace; and when they themselves obtained evidence of the happiness of the little outcasts, envy, hatred, and malice nipped and gnawed their hearts, to such an extent, that their whole thoughts were engrossed with the desire of discovering some means to render the two children unhappy, and to plunge them into misfortune. The wicked daughter allowed her mother no rest. "It was I who was entitled to the good luck of becoming a queen," said she. "Only be quiet," was the old witch's answer; "and when an opportunity occurs, I will not fail to assist you."

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ELEVENTH PICTURE.

[See Frontispiece.]

TIME wore on, and the Queen gave birth to a beautiful little boy, while the King was absent on the chase. The old witch then assumed the shape of a chamber-maid, and, entering the Queen's bed-room, addressed the invalid, "Your Majesty's bath is ready; will you be pleased to enter, before it gets cold." Her daughter, who was close at hand, assisted her to carry the Queen, sick as she was, into the bath-room. The affectionate Roe, who was tethered in the Queen's chamber, suspected their evil design, and tried to stop them, butting against the witch with his head and horns, but in vain; for having placed the sick Queen in the water, they quickly left her, and shut

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the door. They had, however, contrived to heat the fire beneath the bath to the temperature of a furnace, so that the beautiful young Queen ran the risk in a short time of being suffocated.

As soon as this was accomplished, the old woman took her daughter, and laid her in the bed, in the place of the Queen. She transformed her so as to resemble the Queen precisely both in figure and countenance, in all respects except that of the lost eye, which she was unable to restore. But in order to prevent the King's detecting or remarking the defect, she was obliged to lie down on the side on which she had no eye. In the evening, when the King returned from hunting, and heard that a little son had been born to him, he was heartily glad, and his first impulse was immediately to repair to the bedside of the Queen, to see his dear wife, and ascertain how she did. Then the old woman called out hurriedly, "As you value your life, don't open the curtain; the Queen is not yet able to bear the light, and she requires rest and quiet."

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The King in consequence drew back, and never discovered that it was a false Queen who lay in the bed. About midnight, however, when every soul was fast asleep in the palace, the false Queen, under the influence of evil dreams, had turned herself round in bed, and the wicked witch had fallen asleep, with her head sunk upon her knees. The nurse, who sat by the side of the cradle, alone remaining awake, beheld the door open, and the true Queen enter. She lifted the baby out of the cradle, laid it in her arms, and gave it suck. She likewise did not fail to remember the little Roe; she knelt down by him, and patted him on the back; next she shook and smoothed the cushion on which her child slept; once more put it to bed, and covered it over with the counterpane. After that, she retired from the bed-chamber, preserving perfect silence. Next morning, the nurse inquired of the warder and sentinels, who kept guard before the gate, whether they had seen any one enter the palace; but they answered in the negative. In this manner, the Queen

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came several nights in succession, never uttering a word; the nurse saw her always, but she never ventured to tell any one a word about it. But after some little time had thus elapsed, the Queen began to speak, and said, "How is my child? How is my Roe-deer? I shall return twice, and then never after." The nurse made no reply; but as soon as she had disappeared, she went to the King, and told him all. "What is it that I hear?" exclaimed the King; and at nightfall he also repaired to the nursery, and watched; but about midnight the Queen once more made her appearance, and said, "How is my child? How is my Roe-deer? I return but once, and never after." The King did not venture to address her.

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TWELFTH PICTURE.

N the following night the King once more kept watch, and she again appeared, and said, "How is my child? How is my Roe-deer? I am come this time, but will no more appear." On this the King could no longer restrain himself, but springing towards her he exclaimed, "You can be none other than my dear wife." "I am she," she exclaimed; and at the same instant, by the grace of God, she was released from the enchantment of the witch, her life was preserved, and she stood before him lively, comely, and hearty. She quickly related to him the criminal and malicious outrage which the wicked Stepmother and her daughter had committed against her. They attempted to make their escape, but they were caught

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by the guards at the door, conveyed into the Bath-room, where the furnace was heated, and they were both condemned to perish miserably by suffocation. No sooner had the wicked witch breathed her last, than all her sorcery was dispelled, and came to an end likewise; and the Roe-deer once more resumed his human shape; and the *Little Brother* and *Little Sister* lived happily together ever after to the end of their lives.

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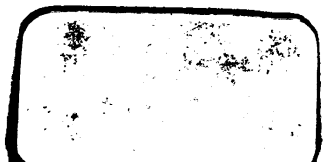

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